

INTRODUCTION	PAST	IDENTIFICATION	PRESENT	IMPLEMENTATION	FUTURE
TABLE OF CONTENTS	Tables		ii		
	Figures		iii		
	Executive Summary		iv		
1. INTRODUCTION			4. PRESENT		
	Introduction to Seattle Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Plan	1	Current Historic Resource Management Policies		63
	Purpose	2			
	Special Considerations Inherent in Historic Park Resource Management	3	5. IMPLEMENTATION		
	Process	6	Recommended Historic Resource Management Strategies		67
	A Note on <i>SOI Standards</i>	7			
	A Note on Historic Landscape Character	8	6. FUTURE		
	Contents	9	Future of Seattle’s Park System		77
2. PAST					
	History of Seattle’s Park System	11	Photograph Credits		81
			Sources of Information		84
			Project Team		86
3. IDENTIFICATION			Appendices		
	Identification and Characterization of Historically-Significant Resources	19	A: Parks		87
	<i>Periods of Influence</i>		B: Designated Landmarks		97
	Early Seattle	21	C: Section 106		99
	Olmsted Brothers	26			
	Playground Movement	45			
	Federal Relief	52			
	Suburban Growth	58			

INTRODUCTION	PAST	IDENTIFICATION	PRESENT	IMPLEMENTATION	FUTURE
--------------	------	----------------	---------	----------------	--------

TABLES

IDENTIFICATION

Table 1	Early Seattle Era Remaining Parks	24
Table 2	Olmsted Brothers Era Remaining Parks	33
Table 3	Olmsted Brothers Era Remaining Playgrounds	36
Table 4	Olmsted Brothers Era Remaining Boulevards and Parkways	39
Table 5	Olmsted Brothers Era Remaining Buildings and Structures	42
Table 6	Playground Movement Era Remaining Playgrounds	48
Table 7	Playground Movement Era Remaining Buildings and Structures	51
Table 8	Federal Relief Era Remaining Buildings and Structures	55
Table 9	Suburban Growth Era Remaining Parks/Playgrounds	60
Table 10	Suburban Growth Era Remaining Buildings and Structures	62

APPENDIX A: PARKS

Table 11	Current Parks and Recreation parks	87
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APPENDIX B: DESIGNATED LANDMARKS

Table 12	Parks and Recreation City Landmarks	97
Table 13	Parks and Recreation resources on the National Register of Historic Places	98
Table 14	Seattle Parks and Recreation resources on the Washington Heritage Register	98
Table 15	Seattle Parks and Recreation resources located in Landmark Districts	98

INTRODUCTION	PAST	IDENTIFICATION	PRESENT	IMPLEMENTATION	FUTURE	
FIGURES	INTRODUCTION			Figure 16	Characteristics of playgrounds designed or influenced by the Olmsted Brothers.	36
	Figure 1	Parks change over time and are developed during many different periods of influence.	4	Figure 17	Olmsted Brothers design principles for formal boulevards.	37
	Figure 2	Differences of scale, from park system, to park, to element.	5	Figure 18	Olmsted Brothers design principles for parkways and “scenic drives”.	38
	PAST			Figure 19	Principles of building design for parks recommended by the Olmsted Brothers.	41
	Figure 3	Parks Growth, overall	11	IMPLEMENTATION		
	Figure 4	Parks Growth, 1851-1890	12	Figure 20	Recommended strategies for parks historic resource management.	70
	Figure 5	Parks Growth, 1890-1903	13	Figure 21	Coordinate historic resource management policies	71
	Figure 6	Parks Growth, 1903-1925	14	Figure 22	Preliminary inventory	72
	Figure 7	Parks Growth, 1925-1945	16	Figure 23	Designation of clearly eligible resources	73
	Figure 8	Parks Growth, 195-1964	17	Figure 24	Establish guidelines for the treatment of historic resources	74
	Figure 9	Parks Growth, 1964-2003	18	Figure 25	Train staff and allocate resources for adequate maintenance	76
	IDENTIFICATION					
	Figure 10	Periods of influence	19			
	Figure 11	Characteristics of Early Seattle Parks.	22			
	Figure 12	Generalized landscape characteristics of informal Olmsted Brothers parks.	29			
	Figure 13	Olmsted Brothers parks generally featured perimeter screening and well-defined entries.	29			
	Figure 14	Views in Olmsted Brothers parks were generally framed with carefully composed plantings.	30			
	Figure 15	Typical vegetation characteristics of informal Olmsted Brothers parks.	31			

INTRODUCTION	PAST	IDENTIFICATION	PRESENT	IMPLEMENTATION	FUTURE
--------------	------	----------------	---------	----------------	--------

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Seattle's historic park resources are an important and irreplaceable component of the park system. This plan establishes a framework for providing the special attention these historic resources deserve.

Since 1884, Seattle's parks system has enjoyed several periods of enthusiastic expansion. Perhaps the most influential occurred with adoption of the 1903 and 1908 plans of the Olmsted Brothers, which prompted a flurry of park acquisition and development. Thanks to the labor made available by the WPA in the wake of the Great Depression, many of the envisioned buildings and structures were realized. The Forward Thrust bond, passed in 1968, and the Pro Parks levy of 2000 are more recent examples of park acquisition and development.

This robust history has left a remarkable legacy. Seattle's historic park resources tell the story of the City's growth and change. While the park system will continue to grow and change over time, it is important to recognize and protect those elements that the community values. Additionally, thanks to the Olmsted Brothers' vision, Seattle's parks constitute an integrated network, which magnifies their importance to the City.

Recognizing the importance of historic park resources and the threats and opportunities associated with them, this plan first describes the historic context of park development and then presents an analysis of various categories of historic resources. Finally, the plan proposes the following nine strategies for park historic resource management:

INTRODUCTION	PAST	IDENTIFICATION	PRESENT	IMPLEMENTATION	FUTURE
--------------	------	----------------	---------	----------------	--------

1. Communicate historic resource policies and practices with other City departments and interest groups.
2. Conduct a preliminary inventory of historic and cultural resources.
3. Undertake designation of clearly eligible resources.
4. Establish guidelines for the treatment of historic resources.
5. Establish criteria and explore options for establishing multiple resource designations for appropriate categories of Parks and Recreation historic resources.
6. Establish multiple resource designations for appropriate resource categories.
7. Designate individual parks and/or elements within the multiple resource designations as opportunities arise.
8. Ensure that internal design review processes for improvements to parks consider historically significant resources.
9. Continue to train staff regarding historic resources and allocate resources for adequate maintenance.

To completely address the needs of historic park resources, it is also recommended that a plan similar to this one be completed in the near future to examine more recent influences, such as Forward Thrust and Pro Parks.

INTRODUCTION	PAST	IDENTIFICATION	PRESENT	IMPLEMENTATION	FUTURE
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